

NECKLACE WITH DETACHABLE NECKLACE STRANDS

RELATED APPLICATION

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/396,154 filed July 15, 2002.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to necklaces and more particularly to necklaces having one or more necklace strands which may be detachably attached, as desired, to create necklaces having different aesthetic appearances.

Necklaces are popular jewelry items and are commonly worn with virtually all styles of clothing. Typical necklaces have one or more necklace strands permanently attached at opposite ends to a necklace clasp. The necklace strands may be formed of natural or synthetic gems, gemstones, pearls, links, chains, beads and the like and may be made of precious or non-precious metals or other materials. Some necklaces are designed especially for evening wear and others are designed for casual wear. Nowadays, it has become popular to wear almost any type of necklace with any style of clothing, which has created a demand for diverse styles of necklaces.

A drawback of conventional necklaces is that the necklace strands are permanently attached to the necklace clasp, thereby preventing the wearer from creating multi-strand

necklaces of his/her own design. This, in turn, has led to the need for the wearer to purchase a variety of different necklaces in order to be able to select one appropriate for a given occasion.

Another drawback of conventional multi-strand necklaces is that the wearer may favor one strand over the others but is unable to wear only the favorite strand because all of the strands are permanently attached to the necklace clasp.

A further drawback is that the color scheme or the configuration of one strand of a conventional multi-strand necklace may not be compatible with the wearer's clothing or other jewelry, thereby restricting the usability of the multi-strand necklace.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is, therefore, a principal object of the present invention to provide a multi-strand necklace in which one or more strands are detachably attached to a necklace clasp so that the wearer can create necklaces having different ornamental appearances.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a necklace having detachable necklace strands so that the wearer can select which strand or strands to be worn.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a necklace ensemble comprised of a necklace clasp and a

plurality of necklace strands which may be selectively detachably attached to the necklace clasp in any desired combination or in any number to create different multi-strand necklaces.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a multi-strand necklace in which the individual necklace strands can be easily and quickly attached and detached from the necklace clasp.

The foregoing and other objects of the present invention are carried out by a necklace comprising a necklace clasp having two releasably engageable parts, two connecting clasps connected to respective ones of the two engageable parts, and a plurality of necklace strands detachably attachable at opposite ends to the respective connecting clasps to form a multi-strand necklace. The necklace strands are provided at opposite ends with connector rings to enable easy attachment and detachment of the necklace strands to the connecting clasps. The multiple necklace strands may differ from one another in color, design, size and the like, thereby giving the wearer a wide degree of freedom to choose which strands he/she would like to wear.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The foregoing summary, as well as the following detailed description of preferred embodiments of the invention, will be better understood when read in conjunction with the

accompanying drawings. For the purpose of illustrating the invention, presently preferred embodiments are shown in the drawings. It should be understood, however, that the invention is not limited to the precise arrangement and instrumentalities shown. In the drawings:

Fig. 1 is a plan view of a conventional multi-strand necklace;

Fig. 2A is a plan view, with the necklace strands detached for clarity, of a multi-strand necklace constructed according to the principles of the present invention;

Fig. 2B is a plan view of another necklace strand attachable to the multi-strand necklace of Fig. 2A;

Fig. 2C is a plan view of another necklace strand attachable to the multi-strand necklace of Fig. 2A;

Fig. 3 is a plan view, with the necklace strands detached for clarity, of another embodiment of a multi-strand necklace constructed according to the principles of the present invention; and

Fig. 4 is a plan view, with one necklace strand detached for clarity, of a further embodiment of a multi-strand necklace constructed according to the principles of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

While this invention is susceptible of embodiments in many different forms, this specification and the accompanying

drawings disclose only several forms as examples of the use of the invention. The invention is not intended to be limited to the embodiments so described, and the scope of the invention will be defined in the appended claims.

Referring now to the drawings in detail, wherein like reference characters are used to denote like elements throughout, there is shown in Fig. 1 a conventional multi-strand necklace 25. The multi-strand necklace 25 comprises a necklace clasp 1, and two necklace strands 2 and 3 connected to the necklace clasp 1. The necklace clasp 1 is of well-known construction and comprises two complementary clasp parts 1a, 1b releasably engageable with one another. The clasp part 1a has a generally T-shaped portion, the vertical leg of the T-shaped portion terminating at its lower end in a connector ring portion. The clasp part 1b has a ring portion coupled by a loop to a connector ring portion.

In order to close the necklace clasp 1, the T-shaped portion of the clasp part 1a is turned slightly and inserted through the ring portion of the clasp part 1b. After the head of the T-shaped portion is inserted through the ring portion, the clasp part 1a is turned back to its original orientation and the two clasp parts 1a, 1b are pulled gently in opposite directions to releasably engage the T-shaped portion with the ring portion. As is evident from Fig. 2A, the head of the T-shaped portion is longer than the diameter of the opening of the ring portion,

which prevents withdrawal of the T-shaped portion through the opening of the ring portion so that the two clasp parts 1a, 1b are releasably locked together. The necklace clasp 1 is opened by reversing the sequence of steps used to close the necklace clasp 1.

The necklace strands 2, 3 are permanently attached at one of their ends to the connector ring portion of the clasp part 1a and are permanently attached at their other ends to the connector ring portion of the clasp part 1b. A drawback of the conventional multi-strand necklace 25 is that the necklace strands 2, 3 are permanently attached to the necklace clasp 1 so that a person desiring to wear the necklace 25 must wear both necklace strands 2, 3. This greatly limits the useability of the necklace 25 since it can only be worn when a person wishes to display both necklace strands 2, 3.

This drawback has been overcome by the present invention, one embodiment of which is shown in Fig. 2A. Fig. 2A shows a multi-strand necklace 26 comprised of a necklace clasp 1 having two complementary clasp parts 1a, 1b releasably engageable with one another to fasten the necklace 26 around the neck of a wearer, connecting clasps 4, 4 coupled by loops to respective ones of the clasp parts 1a, 1b, and two necklace strands 5, 7 detachably attachable at their opposite ends to respective ones of the connecting clasps 4, 4.

The necklace clasp 1 is the same as that shown and described with reference to Fig. 1 and thus a detailed description thereof will be omitted. The connecting clasps 4, 4 are coupled through loops to the clasp parts 1a, 1b. In this embodiment, the connecting clasps 4, 4 comprise spring ring clasps of well-known construction. Each spring ring clasp has a spring-biased member that can be extended from and retracted into a hollow portion of a C-shaped housing. Such spring ring clasps are normally spring biased to a closed position though for clarity of illustration, the spring ring clasps 4, 4 are shown in their open condition in Fig. 2A.

The necklace strand 5 is permanently connected at opposite ends to connector rings 6, 6. Similarly, the necklace strand 7 is permanently connected at opposite ends to connector rings 8, 8.

To assemble the multi-strand necklace 26, the wearer detachably attaches the connector rings 6, 6 and 8, 8 to the connecting clasps 4, 4 thereby creating a two-strand necklace. Fig. 2B shows another necklace strand 9, which is different from the necklace strands 5 and 7, and which has connector rings 10 at opposite ends thereof. Fig. 2C shows another necklace strand 11 different from the necklace strands 5, 7 and 9 and having at opposite ends thereof connector rings 12. The wearer may elect to substitute one or both of the necklace strands 9 and 11 for

one or both of the necklace strands 5 and 7, or the wearer may select to add one or both of the necklace strands 9 and 11 to the necklace strands 5 and 7 to create a three-strand or four-strand necklace.

In accordance with this embodiment of the invention, the wearer may select one or more necklace strands and create a single- or multi-strand necklace having the desired design, size and color. Any desired combination of necklace strands can be made, and the necklace strands are readily interchangeable with one another. Each necklace strand is provided with connector rings at opposite ends thereof for easy attachment to and detachment from the connecting clasps 4, 4.

The necklace clasp 1 together with the connecting clasps 4, 4 constitute a universal clasp to which any desired number and type of necklace strands can be detachably attached to provide necklaces of different designs, sizes and colors. The universal clasp 1, 4, 4 can be sold in conjunction with a plurality of necklace strands 5, 7, 9, 11, etc. of different design, size and color. Alternatively, the universal clasp 1, 4, 4 can be sold separately, and the necklace strands 5, 7, 9, 11, etc. can likewise be sold separately so that consumers can buy a universal clasp and whatever necklace strands may be desired. This provides the consumer with freedom of choice in creating different necklace designs and significantly increases the marketability of individual necklace strands.

While the embodiment of Figs. 2A-2C has been described in conjunction with one particular type of necklace clasp 1 and one particular type of connecting clasp 4, it is understood that the invention is not limited to these types of clasps. Any suitable jewelry clasps may be used in carrying out the invention. By way of example, bayonet clasps, lobster clasps and hook-type clasps may be used for the necklace clasp 1, and lobster clasps and hook-type clasps may be used for the connecting clasps 4, 4. Similarly, the necklace strands may be of any desired design, size, and color, and the necklace strands shown in the drawings are for illustrative purposes only. The necklace strands may, for example, contain natural or synthetic gems, gemstones, pearls, links, chains, beads or the like and may contain precious or non-precious metals. Virtually any desired necklace strand may be used in implementing the invention.

A multi-strand necklace 27 according to another embodiment of the invention is shown in Fig. 3. In this embodiment, each necklace strand consists of a plurality of individual strands connected at opposite ends to common connector rings.

As shown in Fig. 3, the multi-strand necklace 27 has a necklace clasp 1 comprised of two complementary clasp parts 1a, 1b releasably engageable with one another to fasten the necklace 27 around the neck of a wearer. Connecting clasps 4, 4 are

coupled to the clasp parts 1a, 1b by loops. Necklace strands 13 and 17 are detachably attachable to the connecting clasps 4, 4 to form the necklace 27.

In this embodiment, each necklace strand 13 and 17 comprises two individual strands. The necklace strand 13 is comprised of individual strands 14 and 15, both of which have their opposite ends permanently connected to common connector rings 16. Similarly, the necklace strand 17 comprises two individual strands 18 and 19, both of which have their opposite ends permanently connected to common connector rings 20. The connector rings 16, 20 are detachably attachable to respective ones of the connecting clasps 4, 4. In accordance with this embodiment, each necklace strand consists of two or more individual strands. While the drawing illustrates that the necklace strands 13, 17 are each comprised of two individual strands, it is understood that the necklace strands are not limited to two strands and any desired number of individual strands may be used to constitute each of the necklace strands 13, 17.

Fig. 4 shows a further embodiment of a multi-strand necklace 28 in accordance with the present invention. In this embodiment, one or more necklace strands are permanently attached to the necklace clasp, and one or more necklace strands are detachably attached to the necklace clasp.

As shown in Fig. 4, the multi-strand necklace 28 comprises one or more necklace strands 21 permanently connected at opposite ends to connector rings 22, 22, and one or more necklace strands 23 permanently connected at opposite ends to connecting clasps 24, 24. The necklace clasp in this embodiment comprises a hook-type clasp having a hook member 31 releasably engageable with one of the loops of a chain member 30. The chain member 30 has an end loop permanently connected to one of the connector rings 22, and the hook-type member 31 is permanently connected to the other connector ring 22. In use, the wearer selects one or more necklace strands 23 from an assortment of necklace strands and detachably attaches them to the connector rings 22, 22 by means of the connecting clasps 24, 24. The wearer may thus create a multi-strand necklace of any desired design, color and size, based on the wearer's preference.

In all of the disclosed embodiments, the individual necklace strands may be comprised of elements having any desired color, size and shape, and the particular elements shown in the drawings are for illustrative purposes only. Similarly, the necklace clasps and the connecting clasps shown in the various embodiments may be replaced by any other suitable jewelry clasps as would be readily apparent to one ordinarily skilled in the art. Also, the individual connector rings may, if desired, be replaced by connecting clasps or other forms of attachment.

From the foregoing description, it can be seen that the present invention comprises an improved necklace with detachable necklace strands. It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that obvious changes could be made to the embodiments described in the foregoing description without departing from the broad inventive concept thereof. It is understood, therefore, that this invention is not limited to the particular embodiments disclosed, but is intended to cover all obvious modifications thereof which are within the scope and spirit of the invention as defined by the appended claims.